

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMEMBASSY DUBLIN  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8507

C O N F I D E N T I A L DUBLIN 2258

NOFORN

E.O. 11652: XGDS-4  
TAGS: PINT, UK, EI  
SUBJECT: NEW CRAIG INITIATIVE FOR DEVOLVED PARLIAMENT

1. BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED: FOLLOWING TRANSMITTED ON BEHALF CONGEN  
BELFAST: QUOTE. VANGUARD UNIONIST PARTY LEADER WILLIAM CRAIG  
WILL BEGIN SERIES OF SEPARATE TALKS WITH LEADERS OTHER NORTHERN  
IRELAND PARTIES THIS WEEK ON HIS SUGGESTIONS FOR ATTAINING DEVOLVED  
GOVERNMENT. IT IS BELIEVED OFFICIAL UNIONISTS, SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC  
AND LABOUR PARTY (SDLP), NORTHERN IRELAND LABOUR PARTY, UNIONIST  
PARTY NORTHERN IRELAND AND ALLIANCE HAVE AGREED TO MEET WITH HIM.  
PAISLEY'S DEMOCRATIC UNIONISTS AND BAIRD'S UNITED ULSTER UNIONIST  
MOVEMENT (ALONG WITH THE OFFICIAL UNIONISTS, BRANCHES OF THE  
UNITED ULSTER UNIONIST COALITION) HAVE IGNORED HIS INVITATION.

2. MR. CRAIG HAS SUGGESTED THAT NEW ELECTIONS SHOULD BE HELD FOR A  
NORTHERN IRELAND PARLIAMENT AS SOON AS INTER-PARTY AGREEMENT CAN BE  
REACHED ON THE STRUCTURE AND POWERS OF THIS PARLIAMENT. HE BELIEVES  
"SUBSTANTIAL AGREEMENT" REACHED IN AND AFTER THE CONVENTION CAN BE  
BUILT UPON. HE WOULD LEAVE THE QUESTION OF FORMATION OF A  
CABINET ASIDE FOR THE MOMENT AND BELIEVES THE GOVERNMENT AND  
PARLIAMENT OF THE UK WILL AGREE THAT AN ELECTION BE HELD SO LONG  
AS IT UNDERSTOOD THAT THE TRANSFER OF POWERS TO A NEW PARLIAMENT  
WOULD BE DEFERRED UNTIL AGREEMENT ON GOVERNMENT HAD BEEN REACHED.  
MR. CRAIG HAS NOT SPELLED OUT HIS IDEAS FOR COMPOSITION OF A NEW  
GOVERNMENT BUT HE HAS STRESSED THE INEVITABILITY OF THE APPLICATION  
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OF MAJORITY RULE. END UNCLASSIFIED.

3. BEGIN CONFIDENTIAL/NOFORN

MR. CRAIG BELIEVES THAT THE TIME IS PARTICULARLY RIPE FOR A NEW ELECTION. HE BELIEVES THE PEACE MOVEMENT HAS CREATED A CLIMATE BENEFICIAL TO POLITICAL MODERATES EVEN THOUGH HE PREDICTS THE MOVEMENT ITSELF WILL FOLD "BEFORE THE END OF OCTOBER." HE DOES NOT, REPEAT NOT, PLAN TO TRY TO CONSTRUCT A COALITION OF POWER-SHARING PARTIES TO STAND AGAINST THE UNIONIST COALITION BUT WILL PROPOSE ALL PARTIES AGREE FORMALLY ON THE POWERS AND ATTRIBUTIONS OF PARLIAMENT AND THAT A "GENTLEMAN'S AGREEMENT" BE REACHED THAT CABINET MEMBERSHIP SUBSEQUENTLY WILL REFLECT THE PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION POLL. HE SEES NEW ELECTIONS ESSENTIAL TO GET POLITICIANS OFF THE HOOKS OF THE CONVENTION MANIFESTOES, BUT ALSO SEES THREE OBSTACLES: THE "THICKNESS" OF THE OFFICIAL UNIONISTS, THE SUSPICIONS OF THE SDLP (SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC AND LABOUR PARTY) AND THE RELUCTANCE OF THE LABOUR GOVERNMENT TO TAKE ANY NEW INITIATIVES ON NORTHERN IRELAND. MR. CRAIG PARTICULARLY REGRETS THE ABSENCE OF JOHN HUME (AT HARVARD) WHO "IS THE ONLY MAN WHO CAN CARRY THE PARTY." HE SEES PARLIAMENT AT WESTMINSTER AS IRRELEVANT FOR NORTHERN IRELAND AND DISMISSES ANY STOP-GAP MEASURE FOR MAKING DIRECT RULE MORE ACCEPTABLE, SUCH AS GREATER ULSTER REPRESENTATION THERE. MR. CRAIG ALSO DISCOUNTS THE LIKELIHOOD OF A CONSERVATIVE-UNIONIST ALLIANCE. HE PREDICTS THE CONSERVATIVES WILL NOT NEED THE UNIONISTS SINCE HE EXPECTS THE GOVERNMENT TO FALL BECAUSE OF LABOUR DEFECTIONS OVER THE SCOTTISH DEVOLUTION QUESTION ... "AT LEAST 30 LABOUR MP'S WILL VOTE AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT." IN ANY CASE, HE HAS LITTLE CONFIDENCE THAT THE CONSERVATIVES WOULD BE MORE SYMPATHETIC TO ULSTER UNIONISM.

4. COMMENT: CRAIG IS THE FIRST ULSTER LEADER TO ATTEMPT TO SEIZE POLITICAL OPPORTUNITIES THAT HE DETECTS EMERGING FROM THE PEACE MOVEMENT. THERE ARE TWO FUNDAMENTAL QUESTIONS: (A) HOW GOOD IS MR. CRAIG'S JUDGMENT, AND (B) HOW REALISTIC IS IT TO PROPOSE TO NORTHERN IRELAND POLITICIANS THAT THEY AGREE ON POWERS OF A PARLIAMENT WITHOUT DISCUSSING CABINET COMPOSITION AND RESPONSIBILITY? ANOTHER UNRESOLVED QUESTION IS JUST HOW MUCH SUPPORT MR. CRAIG HAS IN HIS OWN PARTY. HE HAS BEEN SELECTED TO STAND AGAIN FOR EAST BELFAST AT THE NEXT GENERAL ELECTION BUT, AT THE BEGINNING  
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OF THIS WEEK, THE VANGUARD PRESS SPOKESMAN SUGGESTED THAT BEARERS OF IRISH PASSPORTS SHOULD LOSE THE VOTE HERE. THIS WOULD DISENFRANCHISE MOST OF THE LEADERS OF THE SDLP AND IS HARDLY A SUGGESTION REFLECTING A PARTY-WIDE SPIRIT OF CONCILIATION. ONE SERIOUS AND SEASONED BELFAST JOURNALIST HAS SAID THAT HE CANNOT DECIDE WHETHER MR. CRAIG IS A MYSTIC OR "JUST THICK." IT IS ALSO POSSIBLE THAT CRAIG IS SIMPLY USING THE NEW INITIATIVE TO IMPROVE HIS CHANCES OF A RETURN TO THE FOLD OF ORTHODOX UNIONISM. WHILE POLITICAL PROGRESS COULD EVENTUALLY COME FROM THE PHENOMENON OF THE PEACE MOVEMENT, IT IS QUESTIONABLE WHETHER THE OLD FAMILIAR

CAST OF POLITICAL CHARACTERS, INCLUDING MR. CRAIG, CAN CAPITALIZE  
ON IT. END CONFIDENTIAL/NOFORN. SPICER. UNQUOTE  
CURLEY

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